

# GUNTON WOODLAND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Chairman: David Briggs    Secretary: Barry Shimmield

**MINUTES** of the 18th Annual General Meeting held at Gunton C.P.School, Gainsborough Drive on Wednesday March 18th 2015, starting at 7.30 p.m.

**PRESENT.** David Briggs (Chairman), Barry Shimmield (Secretary), Carol Murray (Treasurer), Rosemary Briggs (Merchandise), John Dickerson (Web site manager), Mo Dickerson (Minutes Secretary), Janet Field and Chris Chapman.  
Mayor Stephen Ardley, Councillor Mrs M Rudd.  
Guest Speaker Mr. F. Willis  
A total of 40 members attended.

- **Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs. David Coulam and Keith Patience.

Ray Adcock (Gunton Nature Reserve Warden), Dave Boyle (Gunton Warren Warden), Mel Canham and Steve Chilvers

Apologies from a number of other members as notified.

- **Minutes of the 17th AGM**

After welcoming everyone to the meeting, the Chairman gave a short summary of the minutes from the previous meeting. A full copy could be collected from the front desk, should anyone wish to do so. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Janet Field, seconded by Ivor Drew and were approved and signed.

- **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman started by thanking the committee for their support, the work party volunteers for all their good work and Rosemary for all her help, particularly during his hospital treatment, and all the members who helped with the driving to hospital.

The web-site is proving to be very successful and the majority of newsletters are now sent out by email, but if anyone else would like an email version, please let a committee member know.

During the year we had two young people working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Spencer achieved his Gold and Silver awards and is now studying astrophysics at Hull University and Hannah achieved her Bronze award.

We successfully installed a flight of steps at the PwH end of the railway line. They were vandalised almost immediately, but were repaired and have since remained intact.

The annual bird box survey found that 24 had been used for nesting. The number of nests has been down slightly for the last two years, which could possibly be due to Martin no longer being able to put food on the bird tables, but we don't really know. Several boxes that had been substantially damaged by woodpeckers, were either repaired or replaced.

We held the spring litter pick as usual and were grateful to Cllr. Keith Patience for supplying the pickers jointly to GWCP and GPRA.

The away trip to Ireland was not quite so successful as previous trips, but was still enjoyable. We had a day trip to the English whisky distillery, followed by a tour at the Dad's Army museum in Thetford. Another day trip was to the Duxford air show where the highlight was the Vulcan Bomber flypast.

We held our first 'Member's Forum' in the church annexe, which was well attended and gave the opportunity to discuss issues and future plans. Several of the suggested changes have already been initiated. We have closed off a path at the top of Moore's Lane, where we hope to create an area of flowers, trees and shrubs to attract bees, butterflies and small birds. Wally Crowther has kindly given us a donation to buy some suitable plants for the area.

The annual tree inspection showed quite a big reduction in the number of trees that required to be felled. GWCP have completed the work that they were allocated, but Waveney Norse still have some work to do in Foxburrow.

In December a full coach of members went to the Snape Christmas show which was based on Peter Pan and as ever, was very enjoyable. We will be going again this year ! In January regular workers and their partners enjoyed another lovely meal at the Lowestoft college. Then in February, the year ended with an evening in the community centre on Hollingsworth Rd., where we were presented with the highest RHS and Anglia in Bloom award, Level 5 'Outstanding'. A full copy of the Chairman's report is attached as Appendix 1.

• **Treasurer's Report.**

The Secretary then presented the annual accounts.

He thanked Carol for her work as Treasurer and Graham Lawson for auditing the accounts.

He explained this is the last year that Foxburrow A/C will be shown separately, because the two A/Cs have now been merged, and the balance from Foxburrow has been transferred to the Gunton A/C. The Foxburrow balance is therefore shown as 'NIL'.

<b>Gunton Wood</b>	Surplus for the year	£1181.19 (includes £468.39 transferred from Foxburrow Wood A/C)
	Balance at Y/E Jan 2015	£6217.86
<b>Foxburrow Wood</b>	Deficit for the year	£468.39
	Balance at Y/E Jan 2015	NIL (transferred to Gunton Wood A/C)

The secretary highlighted some of the main points of the accounts.

The true surplus, of Gunton Wood A/C , minus the transfer from Foxburrow, was £713, which was a very good result. We had a donation of £250 from ASDA, to compensate for the loss of the Air Show donation. There were several donations from members and Cllr. Keith Patience donated the money for our annual insurance. The calendars sold very well this year, giving a profit of more than £400. There was a surplus on the outings of £541, which was mainly from the Ireland trip because David Briggs did not take the free place given by the operator to the group organiser. The school did not charge for hire of the hall for the AGM, because of all the help we have given them during the year.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Rosemary Briggs, seconded by David Barwick and was carried unanimously.

• **Guest Speaker.**

The chairman then introduced the guest speaker, Mr. F. Willis, who gave a very interesting and enjoyable talk entitled 'The Ups and Downs of Bee-keeping'.

He gave a brief history of bee-keeping, showing an old style straw dome hive which was used until about 100 years ago, before the more familiar wooden hives were created. When bee-keeping began, all the bees were killed in order to harvest the honey, but fortunately, about 150 years ago it was realised that the honey could be collected without killing them.

The wooden hives hold about 50,000 bees, consisting of one queen, 2 - 3 hundred male drones and many thousand female workers. The queen bee will stay in the hive for about 3 years, after which time, a new queen will be created by feeding a few larvae on royal jelly. Only one of the larvae will become a queen, and the old queen will leave the hive when the new one is ready to hatch.

Honey is only collected during May, June and July, when pollen is most plentiful. About 30lbs of honey is left in the hive for winter feeding and also, during the winter, the bees are fed with sugar solution. They are not fed during the summer months, because that would encourage them to stay in the hive and not search for pollen. Nectar is produced from the pollen by passing it from mouth to mouth and it is pure honey that is sold, nothing is added in the jar.

When the honey needs to be collected, a smoke gun is used, which fools the bees into thinking

there is a fire and they must leave the hive. They therefore eat as much honey as they can before leaving, this makes them heavy, so they cannot manoeuvre very quickly and are less likely to sting. Some of the problems bee-keepers encounter are, damage to the hive by woodpeckers and mice and of course the mite that gets into the colony. The bees have to be treated with chemicals every year, but the mites become resistant and so new insecticides have to be created. There are far fewer wild flower meadows now, although some farmers are starting to create wild flower headlands, which is a help. Woodlands are very good as all trees have flowers. In the garden the best flowers are single petalled. Red and white clover is excellent, as is buddleia and lavender. The chairman thanked the speaker and suggested that we could buy jars of honey at the end of the meeting.

- **Election of Committee.**

There was only one nomination for each position and all existing members of the Committee were willing to stand again for re-election so a vote was taken en bloc, proposed by Mike Field seconded by Richard Friend. The vote was unanimously accepted.

Chairman : David Briggs, proposed by Colin Fitt, seconded by Mel Canham.  
Secretary : Barry Shimmield, proposed by Paul Bettis, seconded by Ellie Chapman.  
Treasurer : Carol Murray, proposed by Marie Fuller, seconded by Moira Amor.  
Merchandise : Rosemary Briggs, proposed by Beverley Fitt, seconded by Daphne Williams.  
Minutes Secretary : Mo Dickerson, proposed by Brian Charge, seconded by Kath Charge.  
Member : Janet Field, proposed by Eileen Pembroke, seconded by Betty Easey.  
Member : Chris Chapman, proposed by Richard Friend, seconded by Terry Balls.  
Web Site : John Dickerson proposed by Chris Rayner, seconded by Edwina Jacobs.

Honorary Auditor : Graham Lawson proposed by Jackie Channing, seconded by Val Shimmield.

- **Work Plan.**

- **Gunton Wood.**

The original long term plan for Gunton Wood was created, with the help of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, 19 years ago. So, this year we will try to update it and publish the new plans in the newsletter. Some areas in the wood need more vegetation and trees, but they also need sunlight and rain, so we will look for suitable areas that do not have too much canopy cover. The back of the church near Gunton Church Lane is one possibility now that some dead trees have been removed. We have received several hundred tree whips from the woodland trust which will be planted into the nursery for the time being and then planted out in the autumn.

The Forestry Commission came to do a survey last year and have produced an extensive report, which is available if anyone would like to read it.

The annual tree inspection showed a good reduction in the number of trees needing to be felled. GWCP have completed all the work that was allocated to them, but WN still have some work to do.

We have been trying to improve the main path by removing mud and have uncovered a hard surface. However the job is probably a bit too big for us to undertake and so we will look at the possibility of getting some funding to enable us to use an outside contractor to create a suitable surface.

The ditches around the wood are very overgrown and full of debris. We will try to clear them after the nesting season.

- **Foxburrow Wood.**

The problem with the ditch near to Crome Walk, that was reported at last year's AGM, has still not been resolved. Waveney Norse have done some clearance, but the engineers still haven't produced a report.

There is a need for some more boardwalks , but we would need more funding. We could possibly

apply for another lottery grant.

We don't chip the paths in Foxburrow as it is an ancient woodland. We have continued to coppice the hazels, to extend their lifespan. We try to do 5 a year and the 10 that have been done so far are showing good new growth.

- **Nature Reserve.**

The chairman read a report from Ray Adcock detailing work carried out this year. The main tasks have been clearing brambles, hay-making on Gunton Meadow and trying to control litter. The bird population is doing well and the wild flowers have been particularly good this year.

A copy of the full statement can be found in Appendix 2.

- **Gunton Warren.**

The chairman read a report from David Boyle detailing work carried out this year.

A copy of the full statement can be found in Appendix 3.

- **Church Field Status Report.**

Barry Shimmield gave an update on the progress of the Burial Park.

Gunton Woodland Burial Trust (GWBT) is now formally registered as a charity.

The fact that the burial park is adjacent to Gunton Woodland has meant that the forestry Commission have promised a 'Key Biodiversity Contribution' as an addition to the normal Woodland Creation Grant because we are enlarging an existing woodland. The money is not released until after the work is done, which will be after the final tree planting session.

The farmer finished his last crop in September and then cultivated the land and planted low maintenance grass seed, for which we were very grateful. The layout of the park was marked out with roads, car parks, flower glades, perimeters etc. Top soil, removed from the car park and road areas, was used to create an embankment between the park and Gunton wood, 900 tons of hard core were then laid as a base for the roads and car parks. More than 2000 markers were installed in readiness for the first tree planting, which took place on Saturday 6th December. 120 people turned up and by mid-day it was all finished. The second planting was on 14th February when 90 volunteers again successfully planted in excess of 2000 trees. Another 900 trees, including 'wet area trees' (willow, alder, aspen etc.) were planted by 60 volunteers on 14th March. Other work that has been going on includes fund-raising, web-site creation and plans for the road and car park surfacing. After thanking everyone for their support, in particular, Colin Fitt and Geoff Dyson, councillors for their financial support and the schoolchildren for their help in planting, Barry asked for any questions from the floor.

Will the public be allowed to use the car park? - no, this idea has been discussed and it was felt that the car park must be fully available at all times for funerals and families.

Will there be a standpipe for watering flower memorials? - no, there will be strict rules about memorials, there will not be any headstones or flower vases, just flat wooden plaques marking the graves.

- **Social Events.**

The annual away trip will be to Kent in May and is fully booked.

There will be a trip to Framlingham Castle and Shawsgate vineyard on Thursday 18th June.

Another fish and chips evening is planned for later in the year

A Flower Festival is being arranged by the church this year, so they will not be arranging a Teddy Bear's Fun day, perhaps there will be one next year.

The annual visit to the Snape Christmas show will be on Saturday 12th December.

The spring litter pick is on Saturday 18th April at 9am.

- **AOB**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9:30pm

Minutes Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## *Appendix 1*

### **Chairman's report 2015 AGM**

Thank you to all my Committee and thanks to Mo for all her excellent minutes. Also to John for the News Letters. Thanks to all those that receive them via email now more than half the membership. It saves us valuable funds.

A special thanks to Rosemary for all her help and support through out the year and for taking me to Norwich to the 37 club also to the chauffeurs who took me twice every week.

Thank you to all the members of the Work Parties for without you there would not be a GWCP.

Our young member, who had successfully attained all three D of E awards Bronze, Silver and Gold with us, went off the university. We wish Spencer well.

We have installed steps on the old railway line but unfortunately they were vandalised within a week. We promptly repaired them they are still ok.

The seasons are constantly changing giving nature a hard time getting wildlife and plants confused. However they soon adapt and although things happen at different times plants do appear and birds still nest. Our bird boxes have not done so well this year with only 25 nests in them. But this seems to be a general trend. We wonder if it because Martin can no longer feed the birds.

The spring litter pick was well attended and we collected a substantial amount of rubbish. Thanks to Cclr Keith Patience who kindly donated litter pickers from his Locality Budget for the use of GWCP and GPRA.

Waveney Norse then collected the sacks and took them away.

In May our members coach trip took us to Ireland. Things did not go strictly according to plan but never the less we seemed to have a good time.

This year we are travelling to Kent and hopefully will have a better action packed trip.

In June we travelled to Thetford and visited the St George's Distillery. It was a good job that we were not driving because we all sampled the Whisky. We then went on to take in the Dad's Army Tour around Thetford Town then back to their museum for tea. Despite the exhausting hot weather we had a most enjoyable time.

We held our first members forum which was well attended. This proved eye opening for most of us and gave members a chance to offer their opinions on issues that gave concern.

It gave the committee a chance to talk over these issues and try to address them where possible.

A little more vandalism this time on Moore's Lane. A seat was destroyed.

We had a young lady join us to start volunteering for her Bronze D of E award.

She has completed the required number of hours to submit her papers and hopefully will receive the award.

Barbara Colman at last managed to sell her house and complete her move to Devon.

We miss her call of coff-eeee on our weekly work parties. She has settled in and joined a number of groups including a volunteer one. She is joining us on our trip to Kent which will give us all time to catch up.

Work started in September on the GWBP car park and since has progressed with tree planting Barry will update you later.

We celebrated a silver wedding anniversary on a WP morning with Bucks Fizz.

We were joined by Gillian and Eileen Gabb who came along to present us with a donation in memory of her sister who sadly had passed away. She often walked and enjoyed the wood.

The picnic table was replaced with an A table kindly donated by The Foxburrow Inn.

Annoyingly this was once again vandalised but it was immediately repaired by our band of our volunteers.

At the Forum meeting members asked if we could plant flowers to attract and help bees. It was decided to plant up the path to the farmer's field with trees and then put suitable plants in between them. Also the old circular path in the middle on Moore's Lane was deemed suitable to close and plant with wild flowers and plants to help the Bees. Wally has kindly donated some money and plants have been purchased to plant here.

Existing habitats have rotted down and become straggled so it was decided to reconstruct these and make them more useful to the wildlife.

The paths have required regular maintenance and these have been chipped as often as needed.

The annual Tree Inspection carried out in conjunction with Waveney Norse showed a reduction in the number of trees that need felling or attention. However nature catches you out. A tree deemed to be safe for another year and left for the woodpecker, fell on its own the very next day.

High winds have taken several others that looked safe enough to leave.

The day trip in September took a full coach to Duxford Air show. The weather was excellent and we all enjoyed the show and exhibits. Delights of the day were dog fights by replica WW1 by planes and of course the mighty Vulcan Bomber which when circled made your chest vibrate.

We again had a full coach to the Snape Christmas Spectacular, Peter Pan and were all transported back to our childhoods by the performance of the Coop Juniors.

We have applied for tickets again for Christmas 2015. So watch the news letters for information.

Christmas passed and the New Year. The wood started to come to life early in some ways but late in others. As I said nature gets confused.

The snow drops have been the best ever thanks to our Work Parties in splitting and replanting through out the wood.

The aconites have been some what disappointing this year. It went extremely cold and may have made them think about showing their heads.

We held our Christmas dinner for Work party members at Lowestoft College and all enjoyed an excellent meal with good company.

In February we were invited to attend the Gunton Community Hall.

We were delighted to receive the award for an Out Standing contribution to the community presented on behalf of The RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" and Anglia in Bloom.

A talk on Gunton Woodland Community Project was given to the floor by me.

**GUNTON MEADOW NATURE RESERVE**

The winter work was completed at the beginning of last April and spring and summer was spent maintaining the footpaths and the boundary areas of the reserve. Some of the wooden fencing had rotted and the worst areas were replaced with new wood.

The regular bird surveys during the summer showed that there is a wide range of birds using the woods. Particularly exciting for us was the sighting of a wheatear on the care home site, perhaps looking for a nesting area on the waste ground.

The wild flowers were again very good over the seasons. The primroses gave a particularly good show and have spread considerably since the area has been properly managed. Yellow-rattle was noticed for the first time in the open areas and it is hoped that it will continue to grow and spread. There was a good display of the common spotted orchids but what was outstanding was the number of green-winged orchids on the meadow.

The meadow had its annual cut in September and it took several work-parties to clear the hay. Other autumn/winter areas had their annual cut. This was followed by the clearing of the very heavily bramble infested area by the main entrance to the reserve. It was a bigger job than we had anticipated as the brambles had completely covered the canopy of the area – the reason why it was so dark at all times. The area has now been opened up and quite a lot of the hawthorn removed and we will watch with interest as to how the area develops.

Very little work has been carried out on the ponds. Both ponds are very full with water and this has suppressed the burr reed. The middle pond has been covered with a heavy layer of duck weed but this is now receding rapidly, thank goodness. Both ponds have moorhens on them and a pair on the top pond produced two broods of chicks last year.

The meadow. Other than the annual cut no work is ever carried out on the meadow. Each year brambles are covering more of the meadow area and at the end of last year the Trust removed a very large area of these brambles. Our team will clear up the cut area of brambles and the cut area will be green-hayed in the autumn.

Unfortunately we have had the usual irresponsible youngsters camping on the reserve – we have already had one large group camping on the reserve this year. The meadow is a regular site for drink parties but we hope that in opening up some of the areas it may discourage these events. We know they are youngsters because of the type of food they purchase although they do like vodka.

Rubbish is the pain of the area. Notwithstanding the blue gloves and paper towels from the filling station, fly-tipping still occurs at the main entrance and more and more people are buying food from Tesco, eating it on Leisure Way and throwing the resultant packaging into the reserve.

**GUNTON WARREN**

Gunton Warren was acquired by Suffolk Wildlife Trust in 2013 on a 10 year lease from Suffolk Council, it is hoped that after the 10 year lease SWT will be allowed to carry on looking after the site or even better acquiring it on a permanent basis.

It is a 25 Hectare site of Heathland, Woodland and Shingle and is unique amongst the SWT sites. So far there has been a good deal of Bracken removal, Japanese Knotweed removal and also a great deal of Rhododendron has been cut back to make the site more visitor friendly. It is hoped that all this clearance will encourage more growth of Heather and different grasses as well as the existing diversity of plants, all good for the continued use by various birds, reptiles and insects.

There are 3 areas of shingle that have been fenced off so that plants such as Sea pea, Sea cabbage and Yellow Horned poppy can flourish without footfall on them and also maybe encourage different plants to maybe grow there, this is a 2/3 year project, which unfortunately has been interrupted once by a group of party goers on the beach who decided to use the fencing for their bonfire, however this was repaired quickly and hopefully this will not happen again. There is also plans to put steps on the cliff by the Holm oaks, to make it easier for visitors to gain access to the beach, and to hopefully slow erosion. The WW11 pill boxes and gun placements are being cleared around to be made into features of the site

I feel very privileged to be a part of the group here at Gunton Warren and love working with Matt Gooch (Broads Warden) and the other Wardens, there is also a great group of volunteers tirelessly working to make the site better for all. A big thank you to all of them for their hard work. Thank you for allowing me to give you this short account of the work being continued at Gunton.

Dave Boyle (Volunteer Warden)